

NEWSLETTER

November 2013





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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear ESRS and ANSS members, Colleagues and Friends,

First of all, welcome to the [new members](#) who joined ESRS and have been officially accepted since our last newsletter. Being an ESRS member makes you an actor in the biggest European sleep community, with substantial advantages including free access to the [Journal of Sleep Research](#), preferential registration fees in meetings organised or co-organised by the ESRS, and [travel grants](#) for young researchers. It also offers unique opportunities to interact with your colleagues in a dynamic and multidisciplinary environment aimed at promoting all domains of sleep research and sleep medicine. For all members, do not forget that you can and should publicise your sleep laboratory and actions by entering our [database of sleep research laboratories](#). It is not only important to you personally but also to the sleep community at large, as it demonstrates the strength and extent of the field to our partners and sponsors.

Under my presidency, the ESRS board made a 2013 priority to raise awareness about sleep topics and promote support for sleep research and teaching opportunities at the European Union (EU) level, especially in view of the EU strategic research decisions for the Horizon 2020 program, now officially issued. As previously reported, the ESRS EU Committee headed by Roberto Amici organised a symposium "[Networking to Understand Sleep Functions and Dysfunctions -The European Basic and Clinical Sleep Research Towards Horizon 2020](#)" in Brussels in the framework of the "[European Month of the Brain](#)". Board members Pierre-Hervé Luppi and Lino Nobili also represented ESRS at the "Healthy Brain: Healthy Europe Conference 2013" held May 27-28 in Dublin and liaised with other actors in the field, whereas I myself participated in the "European Brain Research: Successes and Next Challenges" meeting May 14th in Brussels. These actions were timely and successful, but also made us realise the need to join forces with other key actors at the European level to better promote the sleep domain in research and translational areas, and especially in the neuroscience domains. This is why I am very pleased to announce that ESRS has now joined as a full member the Governing Council of the Federation of European Neuroscience Societies ([FENS](#)). FENS (see report) federates 32 national neuroscience and 8 European research societies and very effectively represents and promotes brain- and neuroscience-related areas at the EU level. It also owns a seat in the [European Brain Council](#) (EBC), an instrumental tool in the shaping of EU research policies and projects. Furthermore, joining FENS provides many novel opportunities for sleep researchers in domains such as teaching (e.g. summer schools), promoting (e.g. advocacy actions) and liaising across disciplines, and last but not least makes from now on all direct ESRS members also full members of the FENS with all related advantages. The ESRS also organises on July 4th a one-day satellite symposium entitled "[Understanding Sleep: novel perspectives in Neurosciences](#)" at the [9th FENS Forum of Neuroscience](#) in Milano. And in a spirit of cooperation with other initiatives, it is worth mentioning that the ESRS also exceptionally offers four [Trainee Travel Grants](#) for young scientists to

participate in the upcoming first Gordon Research Conference "Sleep Regulation & Function".

In the meantime, we have conducted what is the biggest operation to date gathering ESRS and ANSS forces at the European level, i.e. the [Wake-up Bus](#) action. Coordinated by Marta Gonçalves (President of APS and ANSS-EC member), the ANSS Chair Ludger Grote, the ESRS EU Committee Coordinator Roberto Amici and myself, these actions are explained in both the ANSS and ESRS EU Committee reports. In a nutshell, the Wake-Up Bus travelled across European countries from Portugal to Belgium, with awareness actions organised in each participating country, and our multilingual on-line survey about sleepiness at the wheel generated 12,000 responses across 19 European countries. At the arrival of the Wake-Up Bus in Brussels on October 15th, the results of the survey were [presented](#) at the EU Parliament in a meeting organised with the help of Parliamentarian Paulo Rangel. This was done with representatives of the ESRS Expert Panel in the presence of Health Commissioner Tonio Borg who introduced the session, and of many Presidents of the National Sleep Societies. Beside these achievements, I am very pleased here to acknowledge the very strong and positive spirit of collaboration between all actors during this project, showing the genuine interest to develop cooperative actions between the ESRS and the Assembly of the National Sleep Societies. I sincerely thank here Marta Gonçalves, Roberto Amici and Ludger Grote for their dedication in this project.

Our next key action is of course the [22nd Congress of the European Sleep Research Society](#) to be held in Tallinn, September 16-20. The Local Organising Committee, the ESRS Scientific Committee, the Board and our PCO Congrex Switzerland have met in Tallinn at the end of October to finalise the program. I can already tell you that we have now an excellent selection of symposia, teaching sessions and keynote lectures, which will make Tallinn a hit in the history of ESRS meetings! The preliminary program will be very soon now published on the [congress website](#), as well as the call for oral and poster communications, and we are looking forward to receive your best proposals.

Following the Paris meeting, Tallinn importantly features the [3rd ESRS Examination in Sleep Medicine](#) aimed at certifying professionals, and the [1st ESRS Technologist Examination in Sleep Medicine](#) exclusively directed at "grandfathers" and "grandmothers" with wide experience in sleep technology, medicine and research. Both examinations will be conducted under the careful supervision of the Sleep Medicine Committee coordinated by Thomas Penzel, and applications forms are now available online. The content of the examination is based on the ESRS [Catalogue of Knowledge and Skills for Sleep Medicine](#), now published in Early View in the Journal of Sleep Research. This important publication aimed at developing homogenous standards at the European level has been made possible thanks to the contributions of distinguished ESRS experts coordinated by Thomas Penzel and Dirk Pevernagie within the Sleep Medicine Committee, and of the rigorous and constructive support of anonymous JSR reviewers. I take the opportunity here to thank them as well as the entire JSR reviewers' community for their invaluable time and efforts helping our Editor Derk-Jan Dijk to make JSR the high-quality journal in the sleep domain. Finally, I attract your attention to the ESRS website, which is now more dynamic than ever. If you not visited it recently, then go to www.esrs.eu and judge by yourself!

I wish you all the best and a pleasant reading of this 2013 newsletter. Sleep well and keep safe, and do not hesitate to contact us with your remarks and suggestions.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'PP', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Philippe Peigneux
ESRS President



ESRS AND THE FEDERATION OF EUROPEAN NEUROSCIENCE SOCIETIES

The ESRS board made a 2013 priority to raise awareness about sleep topics at the European Union (EU) level, especially in view of the EU strategic research decisions for the Horizon 2020 program, now officially issued. To this aim, several actions were conducted and coordinated by the ESRS EU Committee under the direction of Roberto Amici. Although these actions were timely and successful, they also made us aware of the need to join forces with other key actors at the European level to better promote the sleep domain in research and translational areas, especially in neuroscience. This is why the ESRS board decided to join the Federation of European Neuroscience Societies ([FENS](#)). Our candidature was officially accepted at the Governing Council meeting held in Brussels in November 25-26th, where I was invited to participate. FENS, currently presided by Marian Joëls, federates 32 national neuroscience societies and 8 so-called monodisciplinary European societies including among others the European Brain and Behaviour Society (EBBS), the European Behavioural Pharmacology Society (EBPS) and the European College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ECNP). It represents more than 20,000 scientists all over Europe and is an active member in the [European Brain Council](#) (EBC), which is an instrumental tool in the shaping of EU research policies and projects. The sleep domain was not yet well represented in the FENS community, and the ESRS participation is therefore an opportunity to promote our field of research (e.g. advocacy actions) and liaise across disciplines. It is therefore in the common interest of ESRS and FENS to join forces to promote research programs and initiatives.

Additionally, joining FENS provides many novel opportunities for our sleep researchers, as FENS is typically very active in the domain of teaching, organising winter and summer schools and mobility programs for PhD and young scientists on a large scale. As a reminder, ESRS organised in 2009 a Marie Curie “Training in Sleep Research and Sleep Medicine” course that was also part of the Programme of Neuroscience European Schools (PENS), which was a collaboration between the Federation of European Neuroscience Societies (FENS) and the International Brain Research Organization (IBRO). Our participation in the FENS Governing Council also gives us more opportunities to advocate sleep research in Europe. And last but not least, the ESRS affiliation to FENS makes from now on all direct ESRS members full members of the FENS with all related advantages, including reduced registration fees to FENS meetings and free access to the European Journal of Neuroscience.

You will soon receive more information related to your complementary FENS membership, and I hope that you will appreciate like us the opportunity it represents for ESRS members and the sleep community.

Philippe Peigneux
ESRS President



REPORTS OF THE ESRS COMMITTEES

ESRS Research Networking Committee (RNC)

Members (2012-2014):

Coordinator, Debra J. Skene; vice-coordinator, Walter McNicholas; members, Roberto Amici, Simon Archer, Zoran Dogas, Pierre-Hervé Luppi, Lino Nobili, Renata Riha

The RNC has been working to encourage Networking of Sleep Researchers. On 8th November, all ESRS members received a personalised email request to submit details of their Sleep Research Laboratory to the [ESRS Database](#). We have had a good response to this Call with new Laboratories being uploaded onto the ESRS Database. In addition, those members with Laboratories already registered have been able to use the link to update and edit their Laboratory content.

The annual ESRS Travel Grant scheme for young researchers is open for 2014 (a maximum of 10 projects will be financed, deadline 31st December, 2013). For details and eligibility of the scheme see www.esrs.eu/education-career/grants-awards/esrs-travel-grants-for-young-sleep-researchers.html. The scheme is designed to promote travel of young researchers to learn a specific technique or methodology in an experienced laboratory belonging to the [ESRS Network of Sleep Research Laboratories](#). A concrete incentive to register your Sleep Research Laboratory details on the ESRS Database!

Seasons Greetings!

Debra J. Skene

ESRS Scientific Committee (SC)

Current Members (2012 – 2014):

Simon Archer (chair), John Axelsson, Tom de Boer, Alex Iranzo, Mayumi Kimura, Raffaele Manni, Tiina Paunio, Renata Riha, Sophie Schwartz.

Since the previous report of activity, the Scientific Committee has received and reviewed all of the submitted proposals for symposium sessions for the forthcoming conference in Tallinn next year. The Scientific Committee also sought and proposed nominations for Keynote Speakers, Speakers for the joint EBRs/ESRS symposium, Teaching Courses, and Round Table Discussions and Video Sessions. Two members of the Committee (Simon Archer and Tiina Paunio) then met with the Board, Congrex and the Local Organising Committee in Tallinn in October to finalise the Scientific Programme for the conference. I would like to thank all of the members of the Scientific Committee for their hard work with this task, and I am pleased to say that we ended up with a well-balanced and exciting programme that we can all look

forward to. The Committee continues to provide input into the Research Networking Committee via its two nominated members.

Simon Archer

ESRS Sleep Medicine Committee (SMC)

12 November 2013

Current Members (2012 – 2014):

Ludger Grote, Simone de Lacy, Marie-Pia d'Ortho, Zoran Dogas, Colin Espie, Diego Garcia-Borreguero, Walter McNicholas, Lino Nobili, Dirk Pevernagie, Thomas Pollmächer, Andrea Rodenbeck, Marco Zucconi, Thomas Penzel (Chair)

The Sleep Medicine Committee is working towards the next examinations which will take place at the beginning of the next ESRS congress 2014 in Tallinn, on 16th September 2014. The eligibility criteria for regular somnologists are finalised and are now published on the ESRS website. In addition they are published in this newsletter. The beginning (15. January 2014) and the end (3rd April 2014) for the submission of applications is now set and published on the website as well. Any updates will be found there: www.esrs.eu/education-career/esrs-examination-in-sleep-medicine.html.

In addition to the physician, psychologist, scientist regular exam, a grandparents round of examination is set for sleep technologists in close cooperation with the European Sleep Technologist Association. This grandparents round will take place in Tallinn 2014 as well and will include questions and scoring of sleep and associated events. The eligibility criteria are published on the ESRS website mentioned above and the submission dates are the same.

We ask all interested persons to announce these opportunities to anybody interested to receive a recognition of their knowledge in sleep medicine and we will be glad to have a large number of participants in both exams.

The ["Catalogue of knowledge and skills"](#) had been published online in the meantime. The catalogue will be the basis for sleep medicine education courses and for a textbook covering all aspects of sleep medicine required to pass the examination successfully. The Sleep Medicine Committee is currently working on the update of the sleep centre accreditation publication. This update will include technical issues and propose a structure for different levels of sleep centres currently discussed in Europe.

The alignment of the ESRS somnologist certification with the European Respiratory Society (ERS), more specifically the HERMES program for respiratory sleep medicine is continued. One meeting with ESRS and ERS delegates took place during the ERS congress in Barcelona in September.

Thomas Penzel

ESRS EU Committee

Report on the activities of the EU Committee: August – November 2013

Current Members (2012 – 2014):

Roberto Amici (Chair), Diego Garcia Borreguero (Co-Chair), Marta Gonçalves, Damien Leger, Philippe Peigneux, Dieter Riemann

The main aims of the Committee are: i) to bring the topics of “sleep” and “sleep disorders” to the attention of the EU in order to receive support for research and teaching activities; ii) to promote sleep-related issues from a political point of view at a European and National level.

The main achievement of the last four-month period has been the finalisation of the “Wake-up Bus” project, which have been made under the coordination of Marta Gonçalves (President of the Portuguese Sleep Society and member of the EU Committee) with the EU Committee, the Assembly of the National Sleep Societies (coordinated by Ludger Grote), the contribution of the ESRS Expert Panel (composed by Torbjorn Akerstedt, Fabio Cirignotta, Jim Horne, Damien Leger, Walter McNicholas, Markku Partinen, and Joaquin Teran), and under the supervision of the ESRS President, Philippe Peigneux.

The project was aimed at raising awareness among general public and EU officers/parliamentarians of the importance of sleepiness as a one of the main causes of road accidents. The project had three main goals, which were successfully achieved largely thanks to the contribution of the NSS of nineteen European countries (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands, Turkey).

The first achievement was the journey of the “Wake-up” bus through eight European countries. The tour started from Oporto on October 4th and ended in Brussels on October 14th after nine further stops in Lisbon, Madrid, Lyon, Milan, Ljubljana, Zagreb, Wien, Poznan, and Berlin. An awareness campaign was very successfully run by the National Sleep Society of each country visited by the bus and in several countries which were not reached by the bus due to time limitation.

The second achievement was the online European Sleep Study on “Sleepiness and Accidents” that was launched in all countries which agreed to be involved in the project. More than 12,000 valid questionnaires were finally collected and the outcome of the survey will be published soon.

The final act of the project was the meeting at the EU Parliament in Brussels that was held on October 15th thanks to the help of the Portuguese EU parliamentarian Paulo Rangel. During this meeting, the EU Parliamentarians were addressed by ESRS officers, ANSS members, and members of the Expert Panel about sleep and sleepiness at the wheel-related issues and about the outcomes of the online Sleep Study. The meeting was enhanced by the attendance of the EU Commissioner for Health, Tonio Borg, who opened the session (see Commissioner Borg’s opening speech in the appendix).

Few selected pictures which have been taken during either the Wake-up bus tour or the Brussels meeting are shown. A larger set of information and material related to the project, and pictures and movies taken during the different stops of the bus around Europe are available at the ESRS website ([Photo Gallery](#) / [Video Gallery](#)).

Roberto Amici

Photo Selection: Wake-Up Bus on its Way to the EU Parliament

Click on the links below to view the entire photo galleries

[Porto, Portugal, 3-Oct-2013](#)



The Wake-Up Bus starts in Porto, Portugal.



Paulo Rangel (MEP), Marta Gonçalves (Project Coordinator)

[Lisbon, Portugal, 3-Oct-2013](#)



The bus arrives at Praça do Comércio, Lisbon.



Marta Gonçalves presents the project during the Symposium on Sleepiness and Accidents at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Lisbon, Portugal

[Madrid, Portugal, 4-Oct-2013](#)



The bus tours the city of Madrid.



Diego García-Borreguero, President of the Spanish Sleep Society, welcomes the Wake-Up Bus at Santiago Bernabeu Stadium, home of Real Madrid Football Club

Lyon, France, 7-Oct-2013



Pierre-Hervé Luppi, ESRS Secretary, Marta Gonçalves



Information campaign on sleepiness and driving

Milan, Italy, 8-Oct-2013



Liborio Parrino, AIMS President, Marta Gonçalves, Roberto Amici, Chair of the ESRS EU Committee



Press Conference: Marta Gonçalves (3), Liborio Parrino, AIMS President (5), Gian Luigi Gigli, AIMS Past President (6)

Ljubljana, Slovenia, 9-Oct-2013



The Wake-Up Bus arrives at Ljubljana.



Press interview with Leja Dolenc Grošelj, President of the Slovenian Sleep Society

Zagreb and Split, Croatia, 10-Oct-2013



Meeting with local authorities and experts, Zagreb



Local Wake-Up Bus, Split

Vienna, Austria, 11-Oct-2013



Wake-Up Bus at the Burgtheater, Vienna



Wolfgang Mallin, President of the Austrian Sleep Society, distributes information on sleepiness on the wheel to drivers.

Poznan, Poland, 12-Oct-2013



ESRS Wake-Up Bus arriving at Poznan, Poland



Wojciech Jernajczyk, Past President of the Polish Sleep Society (left), Marta Gonçalves, Project Coordinator (2nd from right), Szczepan Cofta, PSS President (right)

Berlin, Germany, 13-Oct-2013



Wake-Up Bus at the Brandenburger Tor



Marta Gonçalves and Thomas Penzel, Chair of the ESRS Sleep Medicine Committee

Brussels, Belgium, 15-Oct-2013

Meeting and Presentation at EU Parliament



Wake-Up Bus Project Group meets Expert Panel and Presidents of National Sleep Societies in Brussels



The Wake-Up Bus Project Group at the EU Parliament: Philippe Peigneux, ESRS President, Roberto Amici, Chair of the ESRS EU Committee; Marta Gonçalves, Project Coordinator; Ludger Grote, ANSS Chair



Tonio Borg, EU Commissioner for Health (2); Paulo Rangel, Member of the European Parliament (3); Philippe Peigneux, ESRS President (4); Roberto Amici, Chair of the ESRS EU Committee (5)



Presentation on the Wake-Up Bus Project



Toast to the successful campaign: Philippe Peigneux, ESRS President; Damien Leger, Expert Panel Member; Marta Gonçalves, Project Coordinator; Roberto Amici, Chair of the ESRS EU Committee; Ludger Grote, ANSS Chair; Jim Horne, Expert Panel Member

... behind the scenes, but in the middle of the action ...

Best Practice Example:

The Wake-Up bus drivers were assessed by polysomnography (PSG) before the journey, a preventive measure that should be applied to all professional drivers.

[The PSG was made pro-bono at the Hospital Cuf Porto.]



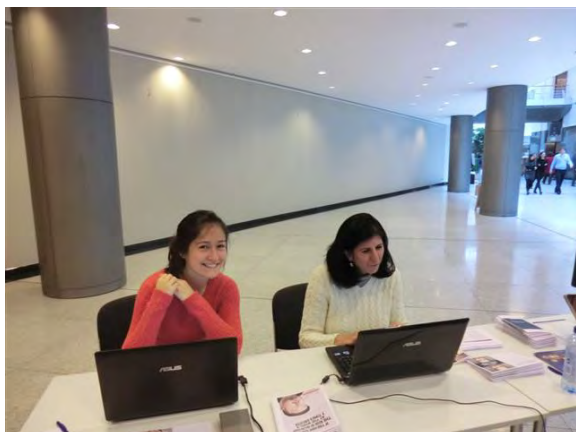
Polysomnography test: Project Coordinator Marta Gonçalves and the Wake-Up bus drivers



Well-rested drivers riding the Wake-Up Bus safely through Europe (Santiago Bernabeu Stadium, Madrid)

EU Parliament Animation:

PhD student and post-doctoral research fellows spent two days in the atrium of the EU parliament administering tests for the wake-up bus operation.



Juliane Farthouat and Rachel Leproult (UR2NF, ULB)



Juliane Farthouat, Medhi Gilson (UR2NF, ULB) and Sonia Scaillet (BASS)



Medhi Gilson (UR2NF, ULB) and an EU officer testing his sleepiness



Sonia Scaillet (BASS), Medhi Gilson, Rachel Lepoult and Juliane Farthouat, (UR2NF, ULB)

ESRS Education Committee (EduComm)

Report on the planned activities: November 2013

Members:

Zoran Dogas (Chair), Roberto Amici, Claudio Bassetti, Colin Espie, Pierre-Hervé Luppi, Stefan Mihaicuta, Thomas Penzel, Dirk Pevernagie, Debra Skene

The Education Committee has continued its work on standardisation of education in European sleep medicine along the track of planned activities in the last report.

The ESRS Catalogue of Knowledge and Skills (CK&S) for Sleep Medicine Experts, Non-medical Sleep Experts, and Sleep Technologists is published in the Journal of Sleep Research, which is an important step in the creation of the standard European education curriculum.

The project of European Sleep Medicine Textbook based on ESRS CK&S is underway with a great help from numerous contributors, section editors, editors, and Brigitte Knobl.

The timeline for production of the textbook is carefully planned and it is very important that all contributors, reviewers and editors follow the deadlines.

The future ESRS examinations starting from Tallinn 2014, as well as the teaching course in Tallinn are planned by the EduComm and the Sleep Medicine Committee, in coordination with the ESRS board, and official announcements will follow soon.

The EduComm is collaborating with the Sleep Medicine Committee, which is currently working on the revision of the 2006 Accreditation of Sleep Medicine Centres Guidelines. This revision will include description and criteria for European STCs which is a very important factor in the future EduComm activities with regard to practical training within the implementation of the standard education curriculum.

Zoran Dogas



REPORTS OF THE EUROPEAN NETWORKS

European Insomnia Network (EIN)

Since the last meeting of the European Insomnia Network in July 2013 in Freiburg, a proposal was developed which was submitted to the EU COST actions. This proposal, if successful, will allow better networking for a period of 4 years funded by the EU. It is not only planned to enhance networking between members of the European Insomnia Network, but it is also another aim to create educational courses for young researchers and clinicians in the field of insomnia.

Dieter Riemann

European Narcolepsy Network (EU-NN)

Summary of highlights

- We expect the next EU-NN publication about the DQB1 locus explaining most of the risk and protection in narcolepsy with cataplexy in Europe, in the January issue of Sleep.
- The preparations for the 5th European Narcolepsy Day are up and running. Poul Jennum will be the host and the meeting will take place in Copenhagen on March 15 & 16, 2014.
- A call for grants to facilitate exchanges between EU-NN laboratories for young scientists and senior investigators have been announced in our website.
- We can offer support to help larger centres to enter the backlog of prospective cases in the prospective database.
- Implementation of a childhood module is scheduled for the first quarter of 2014.

EU-NN membership

Since 2012 the number of EU-NN members has steadily increased. In 2013 seven new applicants applied for membership and were accepted as full members after approval by the EU-NN board. In particular, we welcome Poland, Portugal, and Slovenia to the EU-NN community. As of 1st November 2013, 27 full members of 22 centres from 14 different European countries join the EU-NN.

Current status of the EU-NN database

More than 300 new cases have been entered in the EU-NN database in 2012/2013. Thus, by the end of Oct 2013 a total of 513 cases are included in the database. Data quality algorithms classify 317 of these 513 as validated cases according to EU-NN predefined standards. These data qualify for further prospective studies. This impressive number demonstrates the potential of the database as a resource for future EU-NN studies. We thank the contributing centers for their effort.

As a major action for 2014, the EU-NN tries to acquire 1000 validated cases. To achieve this goal the EU-NN board will offer support for major contributing centers, to enter the backlog of prospective cases. A second action will be to encourage centers to enter follow-up data. So far 97 follow-ups have been documented. Only regular follow-ups will help us to establish the first prospective narcolepsy database worldwide.

We are pleased to announce the implementation of a special childhood database module in the first quarter of 2014. Database structure resembles that of adult database but additional fields will cover specific aspects of childhood narcolepsy.

5th European Narcolepsy Day

The preparations for the 5th European Narcolepsy Day are up and running. Poul Jennum will be the host and the meeting will take place in Copenhagen on March 15 & 16, 2014. The final announcement including the scientific programme with exciting news and updates, and the call to apply for the young investigators award will be sent out soon. The annual assembly will immediately follow the scientific programme on the 15th and the day will be finished with a dinner.

Although autumn has started in Europe, the EU-NN is entering spring!

Gert Jan Lammers, President of the EU-NN

For any questions please don't hesitate to contact us.

European Narcolepsy Network (EU-NN), Rudolf Bultmann Strasse 8, 35039 Marburg Germany
www.narcolepsy-network.eu/



REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY OF NATIONAL SLEEP SOCIETIES (ANSS)

August to November 2013

The EC of the ANSS has met in Valencia (September 2013) and had frequent contacts via e-mail and phone. The activities can be summarised as follows:

Our main activity during the last period was the organisation of the EU Wake Up Bus project initiated by Marta Gonçalves together with the EU Committee headed by Roberto Amici and the ESRS President Philippe Peigneux. This successful collaboration within the ESRS highlighted the importance and potential of the ANSS structure within the ESRS. It was a historic moment to join the EU symposium on sleepy driving together with the substantial number of European Sleep Society presidents and members. We therefore would like to thank Marta Gonçalves for her outstanding performance before, during and after the campaign and also all members of the National Sleep Societies for their enormous efforts to perform this unique and very successful campaign in Europe. The EC-ANNS aims to further develop this collaboration between national sleep societies and the different bodies of the ESRS in the future. For more details of the project and the single contributions of the National Sleep Societies, please read also the report of the EU committee and visit the ESRS website (www.esrs.eu).

Our second important activity is the ongoing preparation for the Annual ANNS president meeting in Graz, Austria, together with the ESRS board and relevant ESRS committees. We are grateful to Wolfgang Mallin and the Austrian Sleep Society who will host the meeting in 2014. **All presidents of the National Sleep Societies - please note already now the date: Friday the 2nd of May until Sunday the 4th of May 2014.** We will send more detailed information soon.

Our third focus is on the finalisation of several status reports regarding education, certification and reimbursement of sleep medicine services in Europe. This work is in progress and we plan to present the most recent data in the first half of 2014. In addition, we aim to update the information of the ESRS webpage with regard to the ANSS. There have been major developments to be presented on the website.

Finally, we would like to encourage you (specifically the board members of the National Sleep Societies) to review the representation of your National Sleep Society on the ESRS website (www.esrs.eu/committees-networks/assembly-of-national-sleep-societies-anss/anss-profiles.html). In case of updates, please contact your National Sleep Society board which will communicate the necessary changes to the ESRS webmaster (esrs.bk@online.de). Please, review also the representation of sleep research centres in your country (www.esrs.eu/membership-services/european-sleep-research-laboratories.html), current information might be incomplete on the ESRS website.

The EC-ANSS wish you all a Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year

Ludger Grote, Chair

on behalf of the Executive Committee, Assembly of National Sleep Societies



CALL 2014 FOR ESRS TRAVEL GRANTS

The ESRS Board has established a fund to support travel and living expenses for young sleep researchers within Europe. For 2014, a maximum of ten projects will be financed and the deadline for applications is **31st December, 2013**.

ESRS Network of Sleep Research Laboratories

General principles:

1. to promote travel of young researchers in order to learn a specific technique or methodology in an experienced laboratory belonging to the ESRS Network of Sleep Research Laboratories (see ESRS website for list of Sleep Research Laboratories (www.esrs.eu/membership-services/european-sleep-research-laboratories.html));
2. training can be undertaken in any aspect of sleep research;
3. support will be provided to travel from the home laboratory to any laboratory of the network; the most economical mode of travel should be chosen;
4. a maximum contribution of 1,400 EUR for accommodation and living expenses (no more than 100 EUR/day) to finance the living-expenses will be provided. Visits would typically be up to two weeks, although the duration of the stay may exceed two weeks (up to the 1,400 EUR limit). The receiving laboratory is expected to finance the living-expenses during the stay, at least partially, if it exceeds the size of the ESRS contribution;
5. a maximum of ten grants per year will be financed;
6. the ESRS will support only trips within Europe and applicants should be an ESRS member;
7. applicants should be less than 40 years of age, working as a postdoctoral researcher or clinician in sleep research. Applicants registered in a PhD or Master programme are also eligible and are encouraged to apply.

Application:

1. deadline: 31st December 2013;
2. the application (consisting of a short curriculum of the applicant's age, affiliation, position, publication list and congress participation, project to be developed during the stay, letter of acceptance of receiving laboratory, certification of enrolment in a PhD/ Master programme, and dates of the visit) should be sent to the ESRS Secretary (secretary@esrs.eu);
3. the ESRS Research Networking Committee will rank the grant applications;
4. a list of Sleep Research Laboratories in Europe to host young scientists is available on the ESRS website (www.esrs.eu/membership-services/european-sleep-research-laboratories.html).

Debra J. Skene
Chair of the ESRS Research Networking Committee



3RD ESRS EXAMINATION IN SLEEP MEDICINE

The European Sleep Research Society (ESRS) Board is pleased to announce the third examination of the certification in sleep medicine which will take place on:

Tuesday, 16 September 2014 at 17:30 – 18:45

at the ESRS Congress in Tallinn, Estonia.

The examination will be a written test consisting of 50 multiple-choice questions to be completed on-site. Cut-off for successfully pass the examination is 50% of correct answers.

Doctors, Physicians, and Psychologists that wish to take the examination should normally have completed the following (please prepare the mentioned documents before starting with the application):

Practical Experience

The candidate will be required to provide a written declaration from the Sleep Medicine Centre (SMC) Director where the greater part of his/ her training was completed. The declaration must specify satisfactory and independent performance of the following:

1. A minimum of 12 months full-time (or equivalent duration if part-time) spent in the SMC. If the applicant has worked in more than one SMC, a minimum period of 6 months must have been spent at one of the centres.
2. Applicants should have extensive experience within their specialised field with sufficient experience across other sleep-wake disorders to ensure safe and competent practice.
3. As a recommended minimum, therefore, applicants should have been closely involved with the specialised evaluation and clinical care of at least 100 patients, preferably including adults and children. Specialised in this context refers to the interaction of sleep specialisation and professional specialisation.
4. More detailed (but again) minimal levels of experience for physicians, therefore, should include sleep-breathing disorder (40 cases), insomnia disorder (10), hypersomnia, movement disorder, circadian disorder (20). Experience for psychologists should include insomnia disorder (40), sleep-breathing disorder, hypersomnia, movement disorder, circadian disorder (30).
5. In relation to assessment, experience should comprise a range of procedures including clinical interviewing, use of diagnostic criteria and classification systems, use of sleep diaries, questionnaires and rating scales, psychometric evaluation (minimum of) as well as physiological monitoring.
6. Whereas many of these assessment procedures are generic, minimal levels of actigraphic experience (20 for physicians; 40 for psychologists) and

psychometric/ neuropsychological evaluation (40 for psychologists) are recommended.

7. Polysomnography (PSG) skills for physicians should include hook-up, nighttime surveillance (30), and scoring, interpretation and reporting (100). These applicants should also have experience of ambulatory cardio-respiratory recording (20), and Multiple Sleep Latency Test (MSLT) or Maintenance of Wakefulness Test (MWT) procedures (10). PSG and other monitoring skills for psychologists should also cover the above range of procedures in at least 20 patients.
8. In relation to treatment, applicants should have generic skills including patient education, treatment delivery, progress review, provision of motivation and support, and knowledge of how to work as part of team, including for example sleep technologists and nurses.
9. Applicants should also have extensive experience within their professional discipline (physician, clinical psychologist, sleep scientist). Accordingly it is recognised that experience of treatment modalities will vary (e.g. physician – pharmacotherapy, CPAP; psychologist – CBT, health behaviour change).
10. It is expected that, of the minimum 100 cases evaluated, at least 75% will involve active management of a treatment episode or episodes and monitoring of patient progress and outcome. This consideration applies to both physicians and psychologists.
11. It is recognised that sleep scientists may not have a clinical license, or have different roles within a SMC. Nevertheless, equivalent levels of experience and expertise in sleep medicine should be demonstrated in the application and letter of support
12. It should be noted that some of the above experience and competencies may be demonstrable through periods of formal study and training on approved Sleep Medicine courses which have a practicum component. Such experience and/or qualification should be specified by the applicant.

Theoretical Knowledge

The applicant must demonstrate knowledge of the topics specified in the catalogue of knowledge and skills. This may be achieved by a record of attended courses; or through a university or national sleep medicine degree or certification. Alternatively, a detailed reference letter from another ESRS Somnologist may be submitted.

Further details can be found in:

- Pevernagie et al. EU Guidelines for the Certification of Professionals in Sleep Medicine: Report of the Task Force of the ESRS. J. Sleep Research (2009) 18, 136-141
- Penzel et al. Catalogue of knowledge and skills. J. Sleep Research (2013) online DOI: 10.1111/jsr.12095

In addition applicants must:

- Provide names and contact details of 2 referees, preferably from another European country
- Be a current ESRS members
- Pay the examination fee

Other candidates that feel they may fulfil the eligibility criteria please contact:
esrs@congrex-switzerland.com

The successful candidates will be conferred the ESRS qualification title of "Somnologist" with following specifications:

- Somnologist – in sleep medicine
- Somnologist – in behavioural sleep medicine
- Somnologist – sleep scientist

The examination fee is € 350.- (included is a non-refundable € 90.- application fee, payable at submission of application).

The online application will open on 15 January 2014.

Application will close on 3 April 2014.

You will be notified about acceptance of your application in June 2014.

For any questions please contact:

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Peter Merian-Strasse 80
4002 Basel
Switzerland

Email: esrs@congrex-switzerland.com
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1ST ESRS TECHNOLOGIST EXAMINATION IN SLEEP MEDICINE

The European Sleep Research Society (ESRS) Board is pleased to announce the first examination of the certification in sleep medicine for sleep technologists which will take place on

**Tuesday, 16 September, 17:30 – 18:45 and
Wednesday, 17 September, 17:00 – 20:00**

at the ESRS/ESST Congress in Tallinn, Estonia.

Please find below some information and instructions on the application process.

The examination will consist of two components. The first part will be a written test consisting of 50 multiple-choice questions to be completed on-site. The questions will be based on the content of the 10 chapters of the ESRS Catalogue of Knowledge and Skills for Sleep Medicine. 23 questions will be related to chapter B (Sleep Diagnostics) and the other 27 will be related to topics from chapters A, C-J. A suggested reading list will be provided. Cut-off for successfully pass this part of the examination is 50% of correct answers. The second part of the examination will focus on practical skills. This part will involve sleep staging, event scoring and interpreting 2 excerpts from PSG recordings and also a full MSLT recording. All consecutive 30-second epochs will be printed on paper. Scoring will comply with the AASM rules version 2.0 (Oct. 2012). Successful candidates will have achieved an 85% concordance with the panel of experts. The practical examination will be held on **Wednesday 17 September 17:00- 20:00**. Both parts must be successfully passed in order to qualify for certification.

This will be the first technologist examination directed exclusively at "grandfathers" and "grandmothers". "Grandparenting" is a procedure which applies to professionals with wide experience in sleep technology, medicine and research. It is envisioned by the ESRS that the "grandparents" in this context may take the lead in future European and National activities to promote sleep medicine professionals.

Technologists, nurses, and other sleep professionals that wish to take the examination should:

- Possess a relevant university degree in sciences or psychology (please enclose copy of degree). Candidates who possess the RPSGT qualification will also be considered.
- Have at least 8 years post graduate experience in performing, scoring and analysing polysomnography and Multiple Sleep Latency Test (MSLT) and Maintenance of Wakefulness Test (MWT) procedures, polygraphy and actigraphy studies.

- Have experience in the diagnosis and management of a full range of sleep disorders
- Have a very good knowledge of sleep physiology and pathophysiology obtained through recognised and accredited sleep education courses and meetings, particularly those recognised and accredited by national and international sleep societies.
- Have held either a supervisory or leadership role in a sleep facility.
- Please note, the examination and instructions will be written in English, therefore candidates must have a good command of English.

In addition applicants should:

- *Be proposed for eligibility for the exam by the clinical director of their sleep centre or a member in good standing with the ESRS that can vouch for their experience.
- *Submit a detailed CV with relevant education and employment history plus scanned copies of relevant qualifications, and meeting attendance certificates.
- Be a current ESRS members
- Pay the examination fee

(*Please prepare the mentioned documents before starting with the application.)

Other candidates that feel they may fulfil the eligibility criteria please contact:
esrs@congrex-switzerland.com

The successful candidates will be conferred the ESRS qualification title of "Somnologist – Technologist."

The examination fee is € 375.- (included is a non-refundable € 90.- administration fee, payable at submission of application).

The online application will open on 15 January 2014.

Application will close on 3 April 2014.

You will be notified about acceptance of your application in June 2014.

For any questions please contact:

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REPORT ON FIRST “SLEEP AND RHYTHMS IN MEDICINE” CONGRESS

The first 'Sleep and Rhythms in Medicine' Congress was held on 15-16 October 2013, at Padova University Hospital, Italy.

Sleep disturbances in patients with specific medical disorders are under-diagnosed and often mismanaged, mostly because of the poor understanding of their pathophysiology. In recent years physiologists, chronobiologists and sleep scientists have produced a considerable amount of data on the causes, the consequences and the management of poor sleep. These, however, have not been translated into routine medical practice.



From left: Rudi Costa, Sara Montagnese, Debra Skene, Roberto Vettor

Accordingly, our goals for the Congress were to provide a forum for scientific discussion on major sleep and circadian topics, and also a bridge to hospital practice and specific clinical applications.

Funded by the Italian Ministry of Health and endorsed by both the Italian and the European Societies for Sleep Research, the Congress was organised in three sessions (click [here](#) to view the Congress flyer):

1. Physiology of sleep and circadian rhythms;
2. Sleep and circadian disorders in specific medical conditions, such as diabetes, systemic hypertension and cirrhosis of the liver;
3. Technical aspects of the study of sleep and circadian disorders.

Speakers were chosen from the best-known national and international authorities in their respective fields of research. They were extremely generous in sharing their expertise, both in and outside the formal sessions, with a mixed audience of about 300 attendees. These included hospital physicians, general practitioners, biologists, psychologists and both under- and post-graduate students.



Eus van Someren



Carolina Lombardi



Pierre Philip, Lino Nobili



Alexander Borbély (right) and young researchers

The Italian autumn obliged with mild evenings, allowing locals and guests alike to visit to the medieval University and the world's oldest Botanical Gardens, and to enjoy a relaxed, outdoor spritz - the local aperitif. They did.

(Click [here](#) to view a photo gallery of the meeting.)



From left: Alexander Borbély, Irene Tobler, Sara Montagnese, Debra Skene, Ueli Schibler, Rudi Costa

The Scientific Committee:

Sara Montagnese, Angelo Gatta and Rodolfo Costa, *University of Padova, Italy*

Debra J Skene, *University of Surrey, UK*

Lino Nobili, Ospedale Niguarda, *Milano, Italy*



REPORT ON 7TH WORKSHOP “SLEEP AS A WINDOW TO THE WORLD OF WAKEFULNESS”

The 7th workshop “Sleep as a window to the world of wakefulness” organised by the Youth Committee of the Russian Society of Somnologists (RSS) and the Institute of Arid Zones, Southern Scientific Center, Russian Academy of Sciences, took place in Rostov-on-Don, October 10-11, being supported by the Russian Humanitarian Scientific Foundation. Forty-four Russian and foreign participants attended excellent lectures by Dieter Riemann (Freiburg), Ivan Pigarev (Moscow), Oleg Lyamin (Los Angeles/Moscow), Pierre-Hervé Luppi (Lyon), Ludger Grote (Goteborg) and Derk-Jan Dijk (Surrey, Guildford). Young participants presented 18 good level posters and had an opportunity for 5-min oral presentation each. The workshop was a great success. The abstracts can be seen at www.sleep.ru.

Vladimir M.Kovalzon, Ph.D.
President, Russian Somnological Society



Front row: Yevgeniy Verbitskiy, Vice President; Vladimir Kovalzon, President of the Russian Somnological Society
 Second row: Ivan Pigarev (3); Ludger Grote, ANSS Chair (7); Derk-Jan Dijk, JSR Editor-in-Chief (9)
 Third Row: Pierre-Hervé Luppi, ESRS Secretary (left)



WHITE PAPER "SLEEPINESS AT THE WHEEL"



The book was published in 2013 in cooperation with the French Motorway Companies (ASFA) and the National Institute of Sleep and Vigilance (INSV).

Preface:

Manuel Valls, French Minister of Interior Affairs

Authors/ Panel of European Sleep Experts:

Torbjorn Akerstedt, Claudio Bassetti, Fabio Cirignotta, Diego García-Borreguero, Marta Gonçalves, Jim Horne, Damien Léger, Markku Partinen, Thomas Penzel, Pierre Philip, Joris C. Verster

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ESRS EVENTS

22nd Congress of the European Sleep Research Society

Date: September 16 - 20, 2014

Venue: Tallinn, Estonia

Website: www.congrex-switzerland.com/esrs2014



Worldsleep 2015 - 7th World Congress of the World Sleep Federation Congress

hosted by the ESRS

Date: October 31 – November 3, 2015

Venue: Istanbul, Turkey

Website: www.congrex-switzerland.com/worldsleep2015





ESRS SPONSORED EVENTS AND ENDORSED TRAINING / COURSES

Gordon Research Conference on "Sleep Regulation & Function"

Date: March 16 – 21, 2014

Venue: Galveston, Texas, U.S.A.

Website: www.grc.org/conferences.aspx?id=0000843

Chair Contact Info: www.grc.org/chairs.aspx?meeting=16791

Online Application: www.grc.org/application.aspx?id=16791

Registration Information: www.grc.org/regpay.aspx

Call for Abstracts:

The inaugural Gordon Research Conference on Sleep Regulation and Function will be held March 16-21, 2014, in Galveston, TX, USA. The focus of this conference is "**Emerging Themes and Paradigm Shifts**". During the past two decades we have witnessed a paradigm shift in the conceptualisation of how sleep is regulated. Within the context of paradigm shifts and emerging themes, a research programme has emerged in which investigators from many different backgrounds ask basic questions about the regulation and function of sleep at a local level as well as at the level of the whole organism. Investigators use a wide range of methodologies developed within the disciplines of molecular biology, genetics, systems biology, neuroscience, mathematical modelling and others. The objectives of the conference are to; bring together scientists from within and outside the sleep research community who will contribute to a highly integrated conference; provide a forum for discussion of the latest research in the field; and contribute to the training of the next generation of sleep researchers.

Abstracts covering any topic of the basic science of sleep will be considered for inclusion, although priority will be given to abstracts that complement the program. In addition to an open abstract call, there will be two moderated **Poster Symposia** on the topics of *Sleep-Immune Interactions and Sleep and Metabolism*. Each poster symposia will include up to 20 posters, and priority for these symposia will be given to trainees and early career investigators who submit abstracts focused on these topics.

Attendance at Gordon Conferences is competitive and by application. Online applications, including abstract submission, must be completed by **February 16, 2014**. Attendance at this Gordon Conference is limited to 200 individuals. For more information, to view the preliminary programme, and to apply to attend, please point your browser to the following link:

www.grc.org/programs.aspx?year=2014&program=sleepreg

If you have questions, please use the "contact chairs" link on the Gordon Research Conferences website.

Mark R Opp, Chair

H Craig Heller, Vice Chair

ESRS Trainee Travel Grant for Young Scientists for participation in the Gordon "Sleep Regulation & Function" Conference

In support of the initiative and to help young European trainees participating in the Gordon Research Conference on "Sleep Regulation & Function", the ESRS will award four trainee travel grants of USD \$ 650 each to young European scientists. Eligibility conditions are to be an ESRS member in standing order and residing in Europe, below age 40 and in a PhD or post-doctoral training program (non-permanent position). Candidates must indicate in their online application to the Gordon Research Conference (free comments box) that they are willing to be considered for an ESRS travel grant. Recipients of the travel awards will be selected based on the quality of their submitted abstract, evaluated by the Steering Committee of the Gordon Research Conference. Posters presented by these recipients will be identified as "ESRS Trainee Travel Award Recipient" to indicate the source of the funding and acknowledge the ESRS contribution.

Edinburgh Sleep Medicine Course 2014

Date: March 17 - 21, 2014
 Venue: Edinburgh, United Kingdom
 Flyer: www.esrs.eu/.../ESMC_flyer_2014.pdf
 Programme: www.esrs.eu/.../ESMC_Programme_2014_-_Aug_13.pdf

This annual course aims to provide up-to-date information on the theory and practice of sleep medicine including practical experience in the technological aspects of measuring and monitoring sleep. The course is aimed at all professionals involved in the diagnosis and treatment of sleep disorders. It is open to applicants from all countries. Competence in understanding spoken English is required.

2nd joint ILAE CEA-ESRS Symposium: Epileptic and non-epileptic sleep related paroxysmal motor events

Co-Chairs: Lino Nobili (Italy), Sofia Eriksson (UK)

Date: July 2, 2014
 Venue: Stockholm, Sweden
 Homepage: www.epilepsystockholm2014.org/.../special-sessions.705.html

Understanding Sleep: Novel Perspectives in Neurosciences

Date: July 4, 2014
 Venue: Milan, Italy
 Programme: www.esrs.eu/uploads/tx_mnmesrscal/FENS_Milano.pdf
 Website: fens2014.neurosciences.asso.fr/.../index2.php?sub=64&left=2&left2=2

Satellite Symposium of the European Sleep Research Society to be held during the 9th Federation European Neurosciences Societies (FENS) Forum of Neuroscience

9th FENS Forum on Neuroscience

Date: July 5 - 9, 2014
 Venue: Milan, Italy
 Website: fens2014.neurosciences.asso.fr/



OTHER TRAINING & COURSES

Practical Polysomnography

Date: February 10 –12, 2014

Venue: Edinburgh, Scotland, UK

Programme: [www.esrs.eu/.../Programme - PSG scoring training.pdf](http://www.esrs.eu/.../Programme%20-%20PSG%20scoring%20training.pdf)

Website: www.ed.ac.uk/clinical-sciences/sleep-research

This three-day course offers practical training on conducting and interpreting polysomnographic recordings.



FUTURE MEETINGS

SomnoAlert 2014 - International Conference on Somnolence Alerting Systems

Date: February 24 - 25, 2014
Venue: Brussels, Belgium
Website: www.somnosafe.com/somnoalert

SomnoAlert is a NEW, peer-reviewed, science and engineering conference focused on the fundamentals, design, implementation, test, validation, and use of systems for characterising the level of somnolence of a subject carrying out a task, and for issuing timely alerts for preventing accidents.

28th International Congress of Applied Psychology

Date: July 8 - 13, 2014
Venue: Paris, France
Website: www.icap2014.com/

Number of attendees: 5000
Contact: exh@icap2014.com



NEW MEMBERS

The Society welcomes the following new members:

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JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Job opportunities can be accessed through the ESRS website at:

www.esrs.eu/education-career/job-opportunities.html

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APPENDIX: EU COMMISSIONER T. BORG DELIVERS SPEECH ON ROAD SAFETY "WAKE-UP EUROPE – DON'T SLEEP AT THE WHEEL"

Tonio Borg

Member of the European Commission, responsible for Health

Commissioner Borg delivers speech on road safety: "Wake-up Europe – Don't sleep at the wheel"

Check Against Delivery
Seul le texte prononcé fait foi
Es gilt das gesprochene Wort

Tonio Borg, European Commissioner for Health, addresses the European Parliament at an event organised by the European Sleep Research Society

Brussels, Belgium, 15 October 2013

OPENING SESSION OF THE EVENT

"WAKE-UP EUROPE – DON'T SLEEP AT THE WHEEL"

**HOSTED BY MEP PAULO RANGEL
ORGANISED BY THE EUROPEAN SLEEP RESEARCH SOCIETY**

**TUESDAY 15 OCTOBER 2013, 17:00HRS
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT - BRUSSELS**

OPENING SPEECH

Honourable Members of Parliament,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be here with you today in this meeting to say a few words about "not sleeping at the wheel" and what the EU is doing to help.

I would first like to thank Mr Paulo Rangel for inviting me and convening this important event.

Falling asleep while driving can have serious consequences which we all know: health problems, disability, or worse.

The EU has addressed the issue of road safety for many years together with the Member States. And there has been real progress.

The latest EU road safety figures show that, in 2012, there were 9 per cent fewer people killed on Europe's roads than in 2011.

However, a lot remains to be done to reduce the toll of road accidents.

We must take action both to protect the drivers and the other road users. Despite declining rates of road traffic deaths, the percentage of road users fatalities remains stable.

Sleepiness at the wheel has many causes.

Fatigue is an important cause. It is estimated that sleepiness is responsible for about 20 - 25% of traffic accidents in Europe.

The Commission acknowledges that sleepiness, in particular Obstructive Sleep Apnea Syndrome, is a risk factor in road safety; a factor that needs to be taken into

account in the delivery of driving licences and in the working conditions of professional drivers.

Firstly we need to be clear.

Drivers themselves must take responsibility in this matter. Drivers need to be made aware of the potential risk of fatigue when driving, and the need to take sufficient breaks or rest to help mitigate its effect.

People who are not fit to drive should not drive.

People who are already driving when they become unfit, should stop driving.

It is a simple message which needs to be passed across widely in national road safety campaigns.

What can the EU do to help?

First we can support Research on sleep, sleep disorders and how to address them for example through road and vehicle design.

As early as 1998, with the Fifth Research Programme, the Commission supported a project called "AWAKE".

This project developed a driver monitoring system that was able to detect driver drowsiness in real-time; and warn the driver through visual warning on rear-view mirror, seat-belt vibration, and sounds, all to wake up the driver and prevent accidents.

Since then, systems of this type have been introduced in cars, coaches and commercial vehicles.

The Commission has also supported a number of studies. One recent study noted that the time of day - early hours of the morning and late afternoon - and the nature of the road contributed to the likelihood of fatal accidents from fatigue.

In addition to supporting research on drowsiness, the current Framework Programme for Research has also invested some 5.5 million Euros to deepen our understanding of the role of sleep in brain functioning, memory and mood disorders.

The new research and innovation programme, Horizon 2020, which will begin next year, recognises road safety as a critical factor. Horizon 2020 will offer opportunities:

- to specifically address research on causes of road accidents and on actions for their prevention and mitigation; and
- to develop evidence-based strategies for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases, including sleep disorders.

Our action does not stop here.

In addition to the support we are providing on research, there are a number of actions we are undertaking in the field of health which I would like to mention.

I said earlier that fatigue is an important cause of sleeping at the wheel. Another important cause is alcohol intake.

We know that one in four deaths on EU roads is linked to alcohol, resulting in 8.000 lives lost due to drink-driving every year.

We also know that alcohol is a risk factor for sleep disorders. Sleep disruption resulting from excess alcohol intake can lead to daytime fatigue and sleepiness and also cause accidents in this way.

Helping to reduce the harmful and inappropriate use of alcohol is therefore one important area for action.

Alcohol intake is so important in relation to road traffic accidents, that we have made progress in this area - one of the top priorities of the EU alcohol strategy.

We are working hard with Member States, with the alcohol and hospitality industry and with other stakeholders to address this issue.

Our action includes campaigns to raise awareness on the risks of alcohol, voluntary curbs on marketing of alcohol, exchange of best practice and support for projects.

A number of Member States report encouraging progress in this area, and we are currently considering what further actions we need to take.

Yet another cause of sleeping disorders which fewer people know about is obesity.

Obesity is a very important cause of sleep disorders, such as sleep apnea, which can cause exhaustion and fatigue: again risk factors for road accidents.

Under the 2007 Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity-related Health, Member States, Stakeholders and the European Commission are undertaking action to promote healthy diets and physical activity.

I am confident that our action in this area can help reduce obesity, and, as such, also contribute to reducing its consequences – sleep disorders being one of them.

Finally, allow me a few words on yet another cause of sleepiness at the wheel: mental health problems.

The interrelation between sleep disorders and major depressive episodes is undeniable: people with insomnia are more likely to have a major depressive disorder.

On the other hand people with anxiety or depressive disorders experience high rates of sleep disturbances. Plus depression is in itself a risk factor for increased alcohol consumption.

In this regard, I have launched earlier this year a Joint Action on Mental Health and Well-being with 25 Member States – led by Portugal - to help prevent depression, to promote its early detection and to improve access to treatment and self-management tools.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me conclude.

Sleeping disorders are not very well known, compared to other diseases. And yet they can severely impact on people's quality of life, on their safety and on the safety of others.

Sleeping or not sleeping at the wheel can make the difference between life and death.

We need to work together to address this important issue. And this is why we are here today.

I wish you a fruitful discussion.

Thank you.